
Britain and Sweden have backed the resumption of talks between the European Union and Moscow on a new wide-ranging agreement, which were put on ice in September after Russia's war in Georgia. Oana Lungescu reports from Brussels:

Ten weeks after the EU made clear its concern over Georgia by delaying talks on a new deal with Russia, most countries in the bloc seem ready **to go back to the negotiating table**. Britain and Sweden, two of Moscow's **most vocal critics**, argued this didn't amount to **turning the page on** the conflict in Georgia. The British foreign secretary David Miliband said the issues covered by the new agreement - including energy, trade and human rights - would be in the EU's interests as well as Russia's.

MILIBAND: I think that in the context of the global economic crisis, which has demonstrated Russia's vulnerabilities rather than its strengths, there is a new possibility of ensuring that EU unity is able **to engage properly with** Russia and engage in a way that respects our interests and our principles and values. I think that's the right way of **going about it** because in the end isolating Russia is not a good option for us. Far better to engage, but in a systematic and **hard-headed** way.

That's not **the view of Lithuania**, backed by Poland. They insist that Russia has failed to keep its commitments and shouldn't be rewarded. But under EU rules, they don't have **a veto on** talks that were simply postponed, not suspended. If the foreign ministers **give a green light** today, talks on the new agreement could resume in time for the EU-Russia summit in Nice later this week. For despite **the shadow cast** by the conflict in Georgia, Russia remains the EU's biggest energy supplier and its third largest trading partner, while the EU is the biggest investor in Russia.

Oana Lungescu, BBC News, Brussels

Vocabulary and definitions

to go back to the negotiating table	to resume talks
most vocal critics	here, countries that were the most outspoken in their disapproval of Russia's behaviour towards Georgia
turning the page on	forgetting about
to engage properly with	to interest and keep interested in a way that is real and useful for both sides
going about it	dealing with/treating the situation
hard-headed	logical, unsentimental and determined
the view of Lithuania	how Lithuania sees and would prefer to deal with the situation
a veto on	the right to stop/cancel
give a green light	here, allow talks to go ahead (a more common expression is 'give the green light')
the shadow cast	the negative effect made

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